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ABSTRACT

A two year pilot project studied difficulties of kindergarten-primary children learning to read via materials printed in the Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA) who, because of immaturity, late development, low ability, or inability to speak English, were expected to experience reading difficulty. Of 39 children in the first year of the study, 20 used ITA and 19 used traditional orthography (TO); however, the investigation was not designed to compare the relative values of ITA and TO as factors in instruction. During the second year of the study, the transition of the ITA-trained group to TO was observed. Conclusions of the experiment included: (1) despite ITA's simplification, reading difficulties remained for some children; (2) initial reading progress depends upon experiences, concepts, and language the child brings to school; (3) the method accompanying use of ITA is important; (4) the total approach used in introducing reading is the vital factor, not ITA itself; (5) for the children in the study, transition from ITA to TO in writing and spelling occurred gradually. (Author/RD)

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#30 Observations of Children's Difficulties in Learning to Read Using (A) Traditional Orthography and (B) the Initial Teaching Alphabet
Out-of-Print

OBSERVATIONS OF CHILDREN'S DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING TO READ USING (a) TRADITIONAL ORTHOGRAPHY AND (b) THE INITIAL TEACHING ALPHABET

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ABSTRACT

This project involved the study of difficulties in beginning reading. The study was of a pilot nature intended to gather information on early reading difficulties; an attempt was also made to evaluate these difficulties in terms of a new medium, the Initial Teaching Alphabet. Thirty-nine children were involved in the study; twenty children in this group learned to read using ITA. An account is given of their transition in reading and writing from the initial teaching alphabet to the standard alphabet. The remaining nineteen children learned to read using the traditional alphabet. The children observed were those who, because of immaturity, lack of English, late development, or low ability, were expected to have difficulty in learning to read.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page No.

INTRODUCTION.......... 1

PART I - FIRST YEAR OF STUDY, 1963-64.......... 5
- Selection of the Classrooms.......... 5
- Selection of Reading Material.......... 6
- Procedure for Observation.......... 7

CHARACTER OF THE CLASSES.......... 9
- Reading Background of the Children.......... 9
- Language Profile of the Children.......... 11
  - Language Problem of the Children in the ITA Classroom.......... 12
  - Language Problem of the Children in the TO Classroom.......... 14
- Instruction in the ITA Classroom.......... 17
- Instruction in the TO Classroom.......... 17

OBSERVATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM.......... 19
- Difficulties Observed in the ITA Classroom.......... 19
  - Continual Substitution for Words With Some Visual Similarity.......... 19
  - Left to Right Progression, and Printing Reversals.......... 21
  - Supplying Context Words.......... 22
  - Capitalization.......... 23
  - Hesitation Difficulties.......... 23
- Difficulties Observed in the TO Classroom.......... 23
  - Substitution of Words with Some Visual Similarity.......... 23
  - Left to Right Progression and Printing Reversals.......... 24
  - Supplying Context Words.......... 25
  - Capital Letters.......... 25
  - Hesitation Difficulties.......... 26
  - Plural Words.......... 27
  - Different Printing.......... 27
- Non-Readers.......... 27

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION.......... 29

SUMMARY - PART I.......... 33

PART II - SECOND YEAR OF STUDY, 1964-65.......... 37
- Programme in the ITA Classroom.......... 37
- Reading in the Second Year.......... 38
- Factors Affecting Reading.......... 41

Page No.

TRANSITION TO THE TRADITIONAL ALPHABET........................ 46

Difficulties Observed in Transfer........................ 46
- Reading Difficulties Observed in Initial Transfer........ 46
  - Capitals.. 47
  - Vowel Symbol Change.............................. 48
  - Change in Verb Tense............................. 48
  - Silent Letters................................... 49
  - Irregularities................................... 49
  - Endings.. 49
- Transitional Printing.................................. 50
- Major Difficulties in Printing Transition.............. 51
- Spelling in Transition................................. 56
- General Progress of the Children in the Second Year of Study.. 59

TRANSFERRED CHILDREN.. 60

Working with Transferred Children........................ 61
- Steps Employed in Helping Prematurely Transferred Children.. 61

Profile of the Transferred Children...................... 63
- Child 1.. 63
- Child 2.. 64
- Child 3.. 64
- Child 4.. 65
- Discussion of the Transferred Children................. 67

DISCUSSION - PART II.. 69

SUMMARY - PART II... 72

The Advantage of this Study.............................. 74

REFERENCES.. 76

APPENDIX A.. 77

APPENDIX B.. 78

OBSERVATIONS OF CHILDREN'S DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING TO READ USING (a) TRADITIONAL ORTHOGRAPHY AND (b) THE INITIAL TEACHING ALPHABET

INTRODUCTION

Learning to read is a complicated task for any child. Concerning reading, Thorndike (1917, p. 323) stated "...reading is a very elaborate procedure involving a weighing of each of many elements in a sentence, their organization in the proper relation one to another, the selection of certain of their connotations and the rejection of others, and the co-operation of many forces to determine final response." When this enormous code-breaking task is presented to a child who is already handicapped by any disadvantage such as immaturity, lower mental ability, limited experiences, or differing ethnic origin, the process of learning to read is indeed a formidable assignment.

Though much has been written concerning reading at the primary level (Monroe, 1951; Gester, 1955; Russell, 1961; Dechant, 1964), little is yet known concerning how children actually do learn to read. According to Scott (1954) there is still no unanimity as to precisely what sort of thinking the reading process involved. In his book "How Do Children Learn to Read," MacKinnon (1959, p. 238) stated that "his investigation primarily acted as a reminder that a child's process of learning to read is still little understood."

This preliminary study was undertaken to endeavour to provide further insight into the reading process, by observing early difficulties encountered by slow-learning children in the first stages of learning to read. For the teacher, it was hoped that the documentation and discussion of these difficulties might provide a basis of awareness and sensitivity to these problems.

The children in this study were, generally, of below-average ability. Their progress in reading was expected to be slow. However, it was felt that this would lead to a situation in which as many reading problems as possible could be represented.

For the first year of study, two primary classes were selected that were considered likely to have difficulties in reading. Each class was in a different school in the same downtown Toronto district. For the first year, the "Janet and John" Nisbet Series was used. The second class used the same series printed in Pitman's Initial Teaching Alphabet. This alphabet, known as ITA, (see Fig. 1) was developed by Sir James Pitman and is being used as a teaching device in many British and American Schools. The ITA is replaced by the standard alphabet as soon as the children have gained mastery of the basic reading process, usually in the second grade. To facilitate the transfer to the standard alphabet, this alphabet has been designed to include many of the components of traditional orthography. ITA is a reading system in which only one symbol is used for each sound. Fig. 1 presents the alphabet which contains all the traditional letters except "x" and "q", and nineteen augmentations making a total of forty-three characters. Only lower case characters are used; capitals are achieved by using a larger version of the same lower case shape (Downing, 1963).

The investigation was not designed to compare the two classes with regard to the relative values of ITA or TO (traditional orthography). The preliminary reports of comparative studies carried out in Britain (Downing, 1963) and in the United States (Mazurkiewicz, 1964) markedly favour ITA as a tool in initial reading instruction, and there was no indication that any liability would be encountered in using the new

Number	*Character*	*Name*	*Example*	*Traditional spelling*
1	æ	ae	ræt	rate
2	b	bee	big	big
3	c	kee	cat	cat
4	d	dee	dog	dog
5	ee	ee	meet	meet
6	f	ef	fill	fill
7	g	gae	gun	gun
8	h	hae	hat	hat
9	ie	ie	tie	tie
10	j	jae	jelly	jelly
11	k	kae	kit	kit
12	l	el	lamp	lamp
13	m	em	man	man
14	n	en	net	net
15	œ	oe	tœ	toe
16	p	pee	pig	pig
17	r	rae	run	run
18	s	ess	sad	sad
19	t	tee	tap	tap
20	ue	ue	due	due
21	v	vee	van	van
22	w	wae	will	will
23	y	i-ae	yell	yell
24	z	zed or zee	fizz	fizz
25	ƨ	zess	houseƨ	houses
26	wh	whae	when	when
27	ch	chae	chick	chick
28	th	ith	thaut	thought
29	th	thee	the	the
30	ʃh	ish	ʃhip	ship
31	ʒ	zhee	meʒuer	measure
32	ŋ	ing	siŋ	sing
33	ɑ	ah	fɑr	far
34	au	au	autum	autumn
35	a	at	appl	apple
36	e	et	egg	egg
37	i	it	dip	dip
38	o	ot	hot	hot
39	u	ut	ugly	ugly
40	ω	oot	bωk	book
41	ꝏ	oo	mꝏn	moon
42	ou	ow	bou	bough
43	oi	oi	toi	toy

Fig. 1. Initial Teaching Alphabet and Comparative Standard Print.

alphabet. In using the two alphabets, the first year of study was in part concerned with the problems due to the irregularities and inconsistencies of standard print; but more specifically, with problems that were solely peculiar to the learning-to-read process regardless of the medium.

The observation of difficulties in early reading and the continuing study of initial difficulties in the transition from ITA to the traditional alphabet (for one group of children) covered a period of two years.

In Part I, a description is given of the children involved in the first year of the study, the selection of reading materials used, the instruction in the classroom, and the procedure for observation. A discussion of observed difficulties is also given.

As learning to read is a continuous process, it was not entirely possible to observe the pupils in each daily reading activity. As a consequence, in addition to regular weekly observations, samples of reading and skill measurements were collected by the observer during the periods of observation.

Part II discusses the children from the total group who continued their ITA reading programme into the second year. Their original teacher continued the instruction. During this period, these children made the transition from ITA to the standard alphabet; factors affecting this transition are discussed.

During the two years, six children transferred out of the classroom in which ITA was being used. The progress of these children is discussed in a separate chapter of Part II.

PART I - FIRST YEAR OF STUDY, 1963-64

Selection of the Classrooms

As the study was concerned with early difficulties in reading, two existing classrooms of kindergarten-primary children were chosen for observation. In the Toronto School Board, a kindergarten-primary class is a special class that includes children who have completed kindergarten, but in the opinion of the kindergarten teacher, are not ready for a formal grade one programme in the beginning months of their next school year.

So that the children may receive additional help from the teacher, the number of children in a kindergarten primary (KP) class is usually less than in a regular grade one classroom. One aim of the kindergarten-primary class is to permit the pupil to progress according to his level of readiness. Thus, for each child, reading could begin anytime during the KP year. Consequently, at the end of the kindergarten-primary year, some children may just be ready for a full grade one programme, while others may be ready for the grade two programme. These latter children are usually late developers, who, during the early months of the KP year, are able to begin a full grade one reading programme.

The kindergarten teachers of the children observed in this study had recommended that these children be placed in kindergarten-primary classes, and had listed one of the following reasons in relation to each child - late development, lack of English due to cultural background, low ability, or immaturity. One KP classroom was chosen for the use of the Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA) and included twenty children. The other classroom that was to use traditional orthography (TO) included nineteen children. The classes were each in a different downtown school, in the same school district, two miles distant from each other.

The ITA children, in September, ranged from ages five years eight months, to six years eleven months, with two additional children who were seven years five months, and eight years one month respectively. The TO children ranged from ages five years eight months, to six years five months with one exception, a child of seven years seven months. All the children had attended kindergarten the previous year for at least part of the year. No child in either class was able to read when this study was undertaken.

Selection of Reading Material

The Nisbet reading series was used in both classrooms. These books were the English version of the American series, known as The Alice and Jerry Books, Reading Foundation Series. The readers were from the same set as was used in the current British ITA study (Downing, 1964). The sets of readers obtained consisted of a first grade vocabulary arranged in two series, one of which Nisbet labelled the "Basic Phonic Series" and the other, the "Basic Whole-Word Series." These series were the only readers available in both ITA and TO—workbooks, number books, story books, Janet and John "Little Books" etc. These were distributed to the two teachers to use as they desired. Both teachers decided to use the "whole-word" basic series and reading began in the first book "Here We Go."

Procedure for Observation

The observer spent a minimum of eight hours of the twenty-five hour school week in each classroom. Because of regular presence in the classrooms and because of the co-operation of the teachers, the observer was early accepted as part of the classroom routine, minimizing the effect of a visitor on the children's performance. In observing the children, daily notes were kept on reactions to aspects of the reading programme. In addition, the children were given an opportunity to work with the observer, reading to her, explaining pieces of work, and discussing their difficulties.

No requirement was made for daily anecdotal records from the teachers. Instead, they were released from their classroom duties one half-day per week to meet with the observer, to decide on materials to be used, and to discuss problems of the programme. During that half-day no reading instruction was given to the children by the supply teacher.

In September and October the children were interviewed twice. In the first interview, a series of questions were used to obtain an informal evaluation of the child's aural comprehension (Appendix A). In the second interview, an informal chat included a schedule of topics that might indicate the extent to which the children had been exposed to reading. The intent was to also explore the limit of their curiosity toward the process of learning to read (Appendix B).

November and December were spent in observing the children learning their first words. From this period to the end of June, twelve informal reading samples were presented to the children in each class. These samples, along with a year's anecdotal record of the children's problems in daily reading lessons, were used to analyze initial difficulties in learning to read. The reading samples are documented and on file in the Research Department. The types of errors observed both in the samples and in daily lessons are discussed in this report.

CHARACTER OF THE CLASSES

Following a year of observing the children in their classrooms, it was possible to collect information concerning the children themselves. This included aspects of their cultural background, their language at home and at school, and their attitudes toward books and reading. All this seemed pertinent to their ability to learn to read. As the two teachers were aware of the particular nature of their classes, teaching strategy was patterned to the needs of the children. Consequently, information on the instruction in the classrooms is included in this chapter.

Reading Background of the Children

From the children's responses to the questionnaire on reading (Appendix B), it was very clear that in the homes of the children from each classroom, books were not common. In answer to the question, "Does anyone at home read to you?", only sixteen children out of thirty-eight answered in the affirmative. To the question, "Are there any books in your house?", only eighteen out of thirty-six answered affirmatively, and even these children's concepts of books included, for the most part, items such as stamp books, telephone books, advertising booklets fastened to liquor bottles, "books that you write in," etc. The same type of information questions about words, sentences, and reading were given to the children in June. Some of their replies proved interesting, in that they indicated the thoughts of some of these children concerning letters, words, sentences, and reading, after a limited exposure to print.

ITA Children

Child 1

Q. What do you think your teacher likes to read at home?

A. She doesn't read at home.

Q. Why not?

A. She does it all here.

Child 2

Q. Can you tell me what a word is?

A. Well, you can talk words.

Child 3

Q. Why do you want to learn to read well?

A. So we can talk well.

Child 4

Q. Why do you want to learn to read well?

A. When you get in grade two, and you haven't learned here, you'll sure have more work to do there.

TO Children

Child 1

Q. Can you tell me what a sentence is made up of?

A. It's made up of chalk.

Child 2

Q. Can you tell me what a word is?

A. "Home" is a word.

Q. Can you tell me what it is made up of?

A. It has a kitchen, and bedrooms.

Child 3

Q. Here is a word. What did I make?

A. You looked at the paper and then you made things with your pen. (When asked what "things" were, the child could not say.)

Child 4

Q. Do your mother and father read at home?

A. No, they only read Italian. Only my aunt and I speak English but I speak it anyway.

Language Profile of the Children

One of the handicaps in learning to read for the children in both classrooms was the discrepancy between the vocabulary they possessed and the vocabulary expected of them in the school environment. There was also a wide breach between their backgrounds and the experiences of the fictitious children in the stories that were read to them, and the stories in their readers, these stories being entirely based on middle-class standards. Because of these standards, Bernstein (1961) suggests a pattern of difficulties which the lower working-class pupil experiences in trying to cope with education as it is given in our schools:

> "Such children will experience difficulty in learning to read, in extending their vocabulary, and in learning to use a wide range of formal possibilities for the organisation of verbal meaning; their reading and writing will be slow and will tend to be associated with a concrete, activity-dominated, content; their powers of verbal comprehension will be limited; grammar and syntax will pass they by; the propositions they use will suffer from a large measure of dislocation; their verbal planning function will be restricted; their thinking will tend to be rigid--the number of new relationships available to them will be very limited."

Bernstein suggests that "these difficulties are not necessarily dependent on the child's innate capacity to learn, as indicated by intelligence tests. They are based instead on the form of the child's spoken language, inducing orientations to particular orders of learning and dimensions of relevance." In an environment detrimental to the development of required language skills, the child's general performance in the school environment will probably be reduced.

Such was the case with most of the children in this study. Discussion with the children in the ITA classroom indicated that their language experiences at home, with a few exceptions, were minimal. Perhaps because of lack of example and practise, some of the children also exhibited poor articulation, with added instances of "baby talk."

The children in the TO classroom were for the most part from newly-immigrated Italian families, and could speak very little English. A few of these Italian children had been in Canada since birth (six to eight years) but had lived in a totally Italian culture, in which only Italian was spoken. In talking to their kindergarten teachers and to their brothers and sisters in the same school, it was clear too, that middle-class language patterns of Canadians had not touched them, and were entirely outside the boundary of their experience. Consequently, the pattern of language to which they were exposed at school was an added problem in their endeavours to absorb some of the language prerequisites of reading.

With these backgrounds in mind, discussion of language problems and instruction of the children in each classroom is presented.

Language Problem of the Children in the ITA Classroom

From the school nurse's reports and from information contained in teacher-parent correspondence, it was apparent that fourteen of the children in this classroom came from homes in which one of the following conditions existed--over-crowding, lack of money, lack of food, noise, and in two cases, extreme dirtiness.

The twenty children included seven children who had repeated kindergarten, as well as one child who was repeating grade one. Five children were from non-English speaking homes; three attended speech class, and one girl was blind in one eye. Except for a few, most could not speak in sentences, several had speech defects carried over from babyhood where no effort had been made to correct the speech pattern. Few had ever been off their street, and contact with the world around them was almost negligible. In a reading lesson (in the month of March) that involved a story about a train, few had ever seen one.

It is likely that this lack of experiences, accompanied by poor nutrition, and in some cases inadequate clothing and lack of sleep, all contributed to the slow pace of their learning.

Above all, it seemed that no one had ever talked to them to any extent or answered inquiring questions. Consequently when reading lessons began, they had no added advantage of having heard the words before they were required to read them. (If a child hears a word, and then recognizes it as a word he knows, i.e., one that is in his vocabulary, or one that he has heard in his family's speech, part of his problem is solved; he has only to learn to identify by sight what he already recognizes by ear.) Therefore, a great deal of time was spent in developing an ability to attach labels to objects. This deficiency, i.e., lack of labels for objects which are familiar to the middle-class child, must of course not be confused with a mental lack on the part of the child. The things with which he was familiar would probably be just as foreign to the middle-class child. This lack did, however, slow the pace of beginning reading in the school environment for these ITA children. For example, in examining household pictures to be used in a phonic lesson, the children know what a safety pin was, but a rolling pin was outside the experience of most of them. However, one boy knew very well what it was. He informed his classmates that "you squash things with it."

This lack of "labels" was obvious when the children were being instructed further in initial sounds. In April they were being shown a film-strip of "beginning sounds." This consisted of six pictures of objects, four objects starting with the same sound, two objects different. Half the children did poorly, their problem compounded by the fact that they first had to puzzle over what the object was called, then say this unfamiliar word to themselves, and then make a decision as to what the first sound was. Examples of unfamiliar objects were a radio, a tent, a feather, a snake.

On another occasion their limited language facility was illustrated when the teacher asked what a sparrow was. No child know. One child asked, "Is it like the Indians use?" When the teacher said no and explained an arrow, one other child asked if it was grass. An informal lesson ensued concerning sparrows. A few weeks later this child was again asked what a sparrow was. He still didn't know. The other children in the room were asked also; all but three knew.

In this type of class, then, many hours had to be spent giving meaning to aural, oral, and visual perception. Without these prerequisites, no progress in reading was possible.

Language Problem of the Children in the TO Classroom

All but two of the children in this classroom were from newly arrived Italian families. The language spoken at home was Italian, the children were well-clothed, and reasonably well-fed, but lived in a restricted atmosphere with little possibility for conversation except among themselves.

The first part of the school year had to be spent in teaching the children to speak English. Again much time was devoted to concepts and labels. The children were encouraged to talk in extended "talking-time" periods. They were also encouraged to bring things to school and these were examined and discussed at great length. Concepts about their daily school life were developed and enlarged. At the same time, much effort was spent in developing the senses, particularly the auditory sense -- "repeat clapping," feeling the pressure of breath on the hands from different sounds, identifying sounds made behind a screen, etc. Though all these reinforcements helped most of the children develop a phonetic ear, a few of the children could not understand what they were supposed to hear. One child, when asked what she heard coming first out of the mouth when the teacher pronounced flower, asked: "Wind?"

Because their initial language experiences were in Italian, many sounds were very difficult for the children to hear and vocalize, e.g., th, wh, s. A good deal of time was spent looking at likes and differences of words, and uttering the words in "chorus" games.

Plural words were a problem; in their daily speech the children did not use plurals. Also the children normally placed the adjective after the noun in their speech. In "talking-time" it was always "seeds apple," "in the book red," and, in a story: "so get it the dog" (So the dog can get it); also in board story reading: Paula(s) run," not "Paula runs."

Despite the fact that the children's English speech was developing slowly, it was nevertheless encouraging to hear their earnest efforts. A few examples including illustrations of omitted sounds and rearranged plurals are given:

1. Dominic, in a game, was supposed to ask "Who are you?" He asked "Why you are?"

2. Cosimo and Clara trying to say *star*, *moustache*, and *scotch tape*, pronounced the words *tar*, *mutash*, and *hots tape*.
3. In talking-time the teacher asked: "Reggina, what are you going to tell us?"

   Reginna answered: "Something story about."

   It was then Paula's turn. This was her story:

   > "I have a very nice story about Julie.
   > She makes our hair. (hairdresser)
   > She has a baby.
   > Her calls Severie."

4. Other incidental chatter in talking-time:
   - (a) I have cards beatle.
   - (b) I dance--I know how to make the feet.
   - (c) Michael bought bubble sticky for one cent.
5. Question: Can we sing Trac Fros? (Jack Frost)
6. In describing a picture of a boy patting a horse, Dominic's description included the sentence: "The boy is softing him."
7. A picture was shown of a man on the street carrying garden tools, and looking in a sporting goods store window. The teacher asked the children what the man might be thinking.

   Answer: "No plant; no seeds; want to fish."

The children showed, during the year, that their comprehension was good even though the grammatical construction of their speech left much to be desired. By June their speech patterns were developing nicely.

In both classes, the important factor was the difference between the attitude of the children to language in September to their attitude in June. By June, the children in both rooms felt free to express themselves both to their classmates and their teacher. Though perhaps not always fluent, their willingness and eagerness to talk was most evident. As language is a prerequisite to reading, this was an important achievement.

Instruction in the ITA Classroom

The ITA teacher spent the first two months of the school year familiarizing herself with the background of her children and their various problems. In November, reading was started with a nucleus of approximately twenty sight words. Reading from the beginning was an enjoyable game, with participation by the entire class. It was obvious that the children took pleasure from their simple word games. The learning of sight words was reinforced by the teaching of such skills as visual and auditory discrimination, development of left to right sequence, using picture context clues, etc. There were also many opportunities provided for conversation, and many stories. An excellent programme of phonic development and word synthesis followed. Teaching was directed to the whole class; oral reading was done in groups.

Instruction in the TO Classroom

The TO teacher spent the first two months of the school year providing the children, most of whom were non-English speaking, with a background of language, and actual experiences, on which to draw. Language development was continued throughout the school year.

Preparation for a reading programme included charts of items with which they were familiar but for which they had no labels. For example, a trip to the vegetable store was made and a variety of vegetables purchased. In the classroom, the vegetables were then examined by touch and sight, their colour, taste, and texture discussed. This active experience was then followed by labelling, and chart-making. This reinforcement pattern following actual experiences was repeated several times. Reading for the month of November was done mainly from the many charts made by the children and teacher.

Formal introduction to reading began in November with approximately ten sight words taught to the entire class. The children were then divided into three groups. All further reading instruction was given at whatever level the child had reached. Opportunity was provided for mobility between groups. The exception to group learning was phonic instruction. The discrimination of sounds was taught in picture games with the whole class participating. Later in the year when the groups were stabilized, phonics were reinforced in each group along with the reading lesson.

OBSERVATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

The months of September and October were spent in reading readiness activities and in the development of sight word vocabulary. For these children, both teachers necessarily introduced formal reading at a slower rate. This proved to be helpful in examining reading problems. With children who have little difficulty in learning to read, most problems are of short duration and are difficult to observe. It must be emphasized as well that this study was intended to examine the kinds of reading difficulties that occurred, not their frequency.

Difficulties Observed in the ITA Classroom

Observations of the children in reading situations led to a detailed record being kept throughout the year of the problems encountered. From this record, difficulties observed have been detailed according to accepted categories.*

Continual Substitution for Words With Some Visual Similarity

As the reading vocabulary of the ITA children increased over the year, the incidence of substitution errors became more and more frequent. Though the pace of introducing new words was slow, some of the children still became confused very easily. The children seemed to be identifying by using only part of a word, either the beginning, middle, or end letter or groups of letters. One factor compounding the difficulty was the presentation of material in the reader itself. As was noted, the "whole-word" basic series was used; introduction in close succession of "like" words as wont and went, red and ried, hous and hors, confused the slower readers. If the "phonic basic" series had been used, possibly this difficulty might not have been evident, as the word presentation is of a different order and does not promote "like" word error.

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* The Gates Diagnostic Reading Tests, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

This compounding factor was not related to conventional print or ITA but to the reading situation presented. Studies of eye movement (Dechant, 1964, p. 187) indicate that in the first grade, not more than one-half of a word is usually seen. The child must then look at the parts of a word, retain them in memory, and combine them mentally to form the whole word. With this in mind, the children of this study had difficulty in differentiating such words as hors, hoem, hous presented in quick succession. With children who normally find the reading process easier to master, this type of "like" word introduction might not be a problem. With three children in the ITA class (and four in the TO room) this was the case. For the remaining children, however, the problem was manifested in their repeated substitution of one "like" word for another.

Three children, early in the school year, had trouble identifying littl and kitten. The problem might have been a compound one, i.e., the similar configuration of the two words, but also the fact that a kitten was little. When the child saw the word kitten, he resolved the meaning as being a little kitten.

Burton and Ilika (1964) have stated that the beginning task of unlocking new words should not be complicated by the introduction together of such words as moon and book, pretty and kitty. The same argument might apply to such likenesses as little and kitten, especially when the term kitten refers to a little cat.

The problem of substitution might not be so critical with average or bright children. With these children being studied, every observation carried examples of substitution for words of some similarity, e.g., mee and wee for hee; wee for wun; tω for boi; but for bee; big for dog; thær for whær; ie for mie.

Left to Right Progression, and Printing Reversals

There were few observed instances of errors arising from reading reversals. The occasions when left to right progression errors were apparent were usually when a word game was being carried out. In a "letter scramble" game, one boy tried to unscramble the letters for father. After much effort, he succeeded, told the teacher the word was father but had arranged the letters backwards: rethaf.

Another child on two occasions in a word drill game, gave the word mæ for cæm.

The same child, in January was reading a board story;

ie can jump.
See father cum doun.

He read the first sentence correctly; then started at the last word of the second sentence and read the four words in reverse order.

(Another child, when asked to read the second sentence of the same board read: See father jump down. When asked where she saw the word jump, she pointed to the first sentence, i.e., she had selected a word from the first sentence and implanted it in the second sentence.)

There were a few instances of printing reversals. In one observed instance, the children were making words on the blackboard from the word at. One child made htat, and called it that. The teacher told the child he had not printed the word that correctly, rubbed it out, and asked another child. This child also printed ht at; the third child printed the word correctly: ŧhat; all three children printed the t before the h but the first two did so with right to left progression.

With the exception of one boy who was still printing n for n, q for p, the instances of reversed printing diminised throughout the year.

Supplying Context Words

As the year progressed, the children in their simple work seemed to be achieving the goal of comprehension as well as "code-breaking." There were, however, some children who now began to supply a word with the right connotation as substitution for a word he did not know, for example, happy for glad. In the ITA room, there were three observed instances of this type of substitution, i.e., the substituted word was contextually correct, but lacked any visual relationship:

The word glad in the I Went Walking primer was very hard for them to remember. The teacher told her top reading group that the word rhymed with mad; one child finally discovered the word, but before this occurred, two others had asked if the word was happy.

On another occasion, the teacher was introducing the colour word white (whiet in ITA). The children had mastered the words red (red) and blω (blue). The teacher therefore displayed a flag and printed the sentence: It iz red , ____, and blω. The boy who was asked (verbally) for the fill-in word, supplied flag.

The same boy was trying to read the sentence: Jon sau tω nue caps. (John saw two new caps). He did not know sau but supplied the word wonts in its place.

Capitalization

The identification of capitals for the ITA children involved only a size variation of the letter. The children did not seem to notice any difference in the larger shape of the letter nor the visual change in the shape of the word. No special teaching emphasis was placed on the larger size letter until the last month of the school year, and then only incidentally.

Hesitation Difficulties

"Hesitation" refers to words the children refused. These were words that they did not seem to be able to use any skill to solve to obtain pronunciation and context.

During the first half of the year's programme when the vocabulary load was small, the ITA children did very well in their daily reading lessons. As the load increased, all but four found it increasingly difficult to solve new words. Vocabulary retention for these children was minimal; continual lesson reinforcement was required.

Difficulties Observed in the TO Classroom

From a record of observations in the TO classroom (similar to that for the ITA room), the reading difficulties of the TO children were informally catalogued.

Substitution of Words with Some Visual Similarity

The children in the TO classroom were observed to have difficulties, as did the ITA children, with words of like configuration and letter similarity. The similarity between the two classes was more apparent during the first half of the school year. Like words being introduced in the series in too close proximity caused confusion in both classrooms.

As their ability to extract meaning from words increased over the year, substitution errors diminished. For example, there were many instances of the child substituting a "like" word, but on hearing what he had read and realizing the meaning was incorrect, the child would re-read the sentence, using the correct word. Substitution errors noted at the end of the year were: went for want, are for were, and will for with.

Left to Right Progression and Printing Reversals

During the early months of reading, there were frequent instances of children looking at a word or a sentence from right to left:

(a) One child, reading a short sentence, started at the last word.

(b) Paula looked at the name "Vincent" and said, "It begins like Janet." She seemed to be looking at both names from right to left.

In their printing exercises, instances of reversals were also observed:

(a) There were instances of a few children copying a word beginning at the last letter, e.g., Janet copied correctly but printed from right to left starting with the t.

(b) Printing reversals of lower-case letters were also observed, particularly with the reversals of p for q and n for n.

(c) One child, printing the word my after an extensive blackboard lesson on this word, printed ym all the way down his work sheet. This child was singular in this classroom in that he had been tested at the E- level, had spent two years in kindergarten, and was already eight years old.

During the latter part of the year, no observed printing reversals were noted, except for the E- child already discussed.

(d) Four children had reversal errors with the words saw and was. One child overcame this confusion and no other errors of reversal in reading were noted. The reversals of saw and was by the three other children continued intermittently and two of these children were still observed making the saw-was reversal in the middle of June.

Supplying Context Words

During the beginning of the year, few context words were supplied by the TO children. Their English vocabulary was too limited for this type of substitution.

In February, there was one instance, as in the ITA classroom, of the word glad being replaced by happy.

During the same month, a phonic picture drill was being given to the whole class. The beginning sound to be learned was b. The E- child mentioned previously, was shown a picture of a book and asked to tell what the object was. He supplied the word read. For a ball and bat, he supplied hit. Though he had no comprehension of phonic intention, he tried to supply words with some association in meaning.

Capital Letters

Capital letters posed problems during the first half of the year. Although the capital letter was usually taught along with the lower case form in his reader, the child often did not meet the capital letter (other than in lesson board stories) until much later. This lack of immediate application in the reader seemed to be part of the difficulty.

Early examples of capital letter difficulty are given:

(a) Matching word cards in a story. A board story contained the word look. A child was given a word card Look to match in the story. He could not find it; he finally matched it to a picture-word card higher up on the board that said Look, look.

(b) A sorting exercise. The words look and Look were to be separated into individual piles; a child was not at all sure that the two said the same thing because they did not look the same; he put them in one pile when capital L was explained.

(c) Capital letter differentiation. The TO teacher called the capital "the dressed up letter." One little boy continually put his finger on a small letter when the teacher asked the children to put a finger on the word that was "dressed up" at the beginning.

(d) Word drill game. Twelve word cards were on the floor in the centre of the circle. Six of these cards were one, two, and three, One, Two and Three. At the end of the game, all the words had been taken (i.e., were known) except for the three capitalized words.

At the end of the year, though there may have been other instances, only one observed capital letter refusal was witnessed. A child was reading a sentence beginning with the word Here. When he refused the word, the teacher printed here on the board, and asked the child what it said. The child knew the word and went back to read the sentence correctly.

Hesitation Difficulties

In daily observations, words refused were usually those with no ready referent for the children, i.e., and, the, there, is, are.

During the last two months, the majority of the children applied the skills they had learned to solve unknown words. When context was missing, words were sometimes still refused. For example, one little boy sounded out the word still correctly. As he did not have a meaning for the word, nor understood the context of the sentence, the word was refused.

Plural Words

As these Italian children in their early speech patterns had never used a plural *s*, they read plural words in the singular, for example, *kitten* for *kittens*, *boat* for *boats*, etc. The teacher spent much time indicating plural words to them. By the end of the year, the difficulty was apparent in the reading of only three children.

Different Printing

A difficulty for three children arose involving a difference in print of the letters *a* and *g*. The children were taught these symbols as *ɑ* and ɡ. When they met these letters in a pre-primer as *a* and *g*, they did not recognize them as any sounds they had been taught. This printing of *a* and *g* was peculiar to the readers used.

As the year progressed, the children absorbed the identity of these strange letters and no further instance was observed of the letters *a* and *g* being refused.

Note.--As "Different Printing" difficulties were not observed in the ITA room, this section was not included. In ITA instruction, two forms of "a" are used, *ɑ* and *a* each with its own sound. The form g is used for ɡ. If there was difficulty, the observer was not present when errors occurred in the ITA classroom.

Non-Readers

Each classroom had a group of four children who seemed to be having paralyzing difficulties in learning to read. Each group was treated differently. The TO children's activities in this group were directed towards more active work with their hands, and a very slow pace in learning words. In the ITA class, the children were moved at a slower pace with the amount of oral reading done, but in all other aspects of their day, i.e., seat work, blackboard lessons, word drill, they were included with the rest of the children. Most frequently the teachers credited this lack of progress to a low I.Q., accompanied by an unfavourable home background.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

In Part I of this study the primary assignment was to observe and record reading difficulties in the situation in which they occurred.

The difference between the language structure used by the child and that presented to him at school was a factor to be considered in each reading lesson. The spare vocabulary and word concepts of each child were limiting factors in early reading.

Capital letters posed a problem in the early part of the TO school year. This problem was overcome as the children encountered the capital letters repetitively in their readers, and in board stories.

Visual as well as aural discrimination was a problem for the children no matter which print was being used. Both classes exhibited difficulties with words of similar configuration. This problem diminished to a great degree in the TO room during the year. Repetition and reinforcement helped the TO children to develop greater skill in observing small differences in like words. Reading reversals of such words as *was* and *saw* however, were a problem during the entire year for a few of the children in the TO classroom. There were very few instances of reading reversals in the ITA room, and only a few instances of printing reversals. The reversal of *sau* and *woz* was not apparent, probably because of their lack of similarity in ITA.

Problems of middle letter identification and plural endings were two of the major difficulties of both classes. Toward the end of the year, most of the TO children had mastered this type of word change. The other children in this room still made errors, but now realized that the errors had been made, and corrected themselves with no help from the teacher or the observer. The problem of middle letter confusion seemed to stay with some of the ITA children to the end of the year.

In an examination of phonic learning in each class, difficulties were compounded by such factors as speech defects, ethnic speech peculiar to the Italian children, and the inability of the child to hear the sounds. Determining the difference between such sounds as m and n, and p and b was particularly hard. The task of simultaneously seeing the letter correctly and applying the appropriate sound, particularly for p and b, and b and d, remained a problem for some children in each class throughout the year. This difficulty was completely divorced from either print medium.

Later in the year, the children in both classes seemed to have less difficulty in learning by sight, words that were taught in context, with some stress placed on a "learned" beginning sound.

Many errors in reading could be attributed to the child limiting himself to a minimal clue. It was obvious that one form of cue was not enough; for example, knowing only the sound for the letter combination sh did not help the child solve the difference between shall, ship, or shop. The solutions of substitution or "giving up" were not sufficient. The child must learn not to use just one cue but to try as many as are necessary to decode the word. If the surrounding words are within his understanding he should be able to use context as an added clue. The problem is then one that requires instruction in strategy, and reinforcement in methods of solution. These difficulties appeared to be directly concerned with learning to read, and applied to both classrooms, regardless of the alphabet being used.

The method of teaching in the classroom differed to some degree. The TO teacher tended to use reading from the textbook (and extra-curricular home reading) largely as a supplement to what had been learned primarily from the blackboard stories, or seatwork exercises. The ITA teacher tended more toward word analysis from the blackboard and reading directed primarily from the reader. Both teachers included phonic lessons as part of the instructional programme.

In terms of ITA, there was no indication that the new alphabet necessitated gross changes in the teaching role other than in the heavy load of preparing new material. (The new print entailed much work in the preparation of word cards and charts.) Though the number of approaches necessary in teaching primary pupils were not diminished, neither were they limited by using ITA. For the slow-learning children in this study, the teaching methods used were appropriate; no speculation can be made as to what teaching attack might be used for the bright child learning to read with ITA.

There was a marked lack of frustration in the ITA classroom. The children generally enjoyed a feeling of success. Two reasonable explanations might be the minimal complexity and great reliability of ITA, and the industry and enthusiasm of the teacher. Much repetition was needed in teaching each reading skill; the ITA teacher was skilful in introducing each skill in a variety of forms, each form holding the short attention spans of the children in the classroom. By using a variety of situations in which to present each lesson, a curiosity towards the world outside of their environment was developed. This was very much to the advantage of these pupils for they did not bring the "curiosity" to school with them. It is a well-known fact that "if a child's curiosity is limited, an important dynamic for learning is removed" (Bernstein, 1961, p. 164). Through the year, the children began to ask many questions, and to listen attentively to the answers to these questions. This expansion of their world and consequently their vocabulary helped in preparing them for their reading programme.

The atmosphere in the TO classroom was one of industry. The general approach toward the children included an understanding of the problems of a non-English speaking child. Frustrations and difficulties were accepted as a likely concomitant of the initial stages in learning to read. The teacher moved the pupils toward overcoming these problems so that after eight months, most of the children were progressing satisfactorily in daily reading sessions. The emphasis on industry and its rewards, and the provision of widely different programmes for individual groups might account, in part, for the progress of these children who also had to cope with the complexities of standard print.

It is recognized that no learning can be guaranteed. Also, the observation of only two teaching attacks and a small number of unmatched children, limits the amount of emphasis that can be placed on the difficulties encountered. An entirely different pattern may have emerged from different classroom environments. Other reasons for reading errors such as distraction, confusion or disinterest must not be overlooked. In attempting to derive meaning from the errors, it cannot be assumed that each error within an accepted category had the same cause. Also, a child might have persisted in the same error pattern, but with the causal factor undergoing alteration. It must also be assumed that some errors were not seen. A complete record could possibly have given a different pattern. Consequently, interpretation must be open to question, though the observations were as objective as possible.

SUMMARY - PART I

Regardless of the alphabet that was used to teach beginning reading, certain difficulties encountered by the children were similar.

The main difficulties for the children in both classrooms observed were:

1. The inability of this type of child to retain skill to which he had been exposed. Added reinforcement by the teacher was needed constantly.
2. The inability of this type of child to use more than one skill in solving a reading problem. The child tended to "give up" if the one skill he tried did not solve his reading problem.
3. (a) A major difficulty in reading was the difference between the language structure used by the child and that presented to him at school. This type of child arrives at school with sparse vocabulary, few concepts, and lacking many of the experiences known to other children. Consequently, the reading material that is presented to him, based on a middle-class environment, is an added handicap in mastering early reading. Perhaps these children would have more success initially if early reading material was geared closer to the child's own background.
    (b) Common difficulties were lack of visual and aural discrimination, plural endings, confusion with words of like configuration.
4. Problems of reversals of such words as was and saw were more common in the standard print classroom than in the ITA room.
5. Initial reading was easier for the ITA children than for the children using standard print. As both classes had competent teachers, however,

the success in reading in both classes depended largely on each child's own ability.

No attempt was made to directly compare progress with the different reading media. As a matter of general observation, however, it appeared that ITA offered a logical print which also eliminated the capital vs. lower case complexity of standard print. Further, ITA alleviated problems of reading reversals observed in the standard print classroom. ITA, however, did not appear to remedy the problem of words of like configuration.

The results obtained within the limits of this study must be interpreted with care. No comparison between the two classes observed would be meaningful. As well as differences in age, language, background, and mental ability, the children were in themselves subject to different time levels of development. There were observable developmental spurts and plateaux of learning within the classes as well as between the classes. The teaching was also dissimilar, and this, combined with the differences already listed, make any type of comparison invalid.

It is important to discuss exactly what ITA is, and how it can perhaps re-order the total philosophy concerning the learning of the process called reading.

ITA has simplified the initial process of learning to read, by its changed orthography. It has taken into account, by as close a standard print correspondence as possible, the transfer back to traditional print. By the elimination of capitals and by the logical approach of only one sound for each symbol, it has made the beginning task of learning to read easier. It is still, however, a simplification super-imposed on a "method" used to teach children to read. In the basal readers used in this study, not ITA alone, but such things as colour, illustration, vicarious enjoyment, etc. provided the initiative to learn to read. In an examination of the oral reading of the ITA children in this study, it seemed that the simplification provided by ITA made the reading task easier. However, the children did not all automatically learn to read well, at least over their first year of instruction.

Tentative conclusions after the first year were:

1. Despite the simplification which ITA offers, reading difficulties for some children still exist.
2. Progress in reading depends initially on the experiences, concepts and language that the child himself brings to school.
3. The method used in accompaniment with ITA is important.
4. The total approach used in introducing reading is a vital factor, not ITA per se.

The fact remains, that in many cases more than ITA is needed to make the type of child described in this report a fluent reader. As was seen in this first year of study, progress in reading depends upon progress in speech, and particularly vocabulary development. Oral language development must run ahead of reading development at all stages. When the child has little chance at home for verbal experiences, and when this type of experience is provided only in the school year and the school room, early progress in reading is bound to be slow.

PART II - SECOND YEAR OF STUDY, 1964-65

PART II - SECOND YEAR OF STUDY, 1964-65

The second year programme involved the documentation of any continuing or new difficulties encountered in the reading, writing, and spelling programmes of the ITA children only. In this year, these children were to make the reading and writing transition to standard orthography. The current literature contains very little information concerning the nature of difficulties that a slow-learning child might have in making this transition. The intent of this report for the second year was to indicate, if possible, the types of problems that would be presented by a change in orthography.

During the two years of observation, four children transferred out of the ITA classroom in the first year of instruction, and two children during the second year. Each of these children continued their schooling in a classroom in which traditional orthography was used. The progress of the transferred children is discussed in a separate chapter of Part II of this report.

The children in the original ITA classroom were kept together for their second year of instruction. They continued their school programme with the same teacher in the same school. The children were visited once a week from September to June. An account of their year's reading, writing, and spelling programme, including the transition to traditional orthography at the end of January is presented.

Programme in the ITA Classroom

At the end of September, 1964, the children in the ITA room were divided into three groups, depending on ability. This grouping was continued throughout the 1964-65 term. Though ability had been defined in terms of reading, work in other areas was also presented at the three different levels. This arrangement proved to be satisfactory, as it provided for individual differences, and each child was able to proceed at a rapid or slow pace, depending on his aptitude.

Each group of children was reading in a different ITA reader; each group exhibited a different level of achievement. As the children used the ITA readers until January, a description of their content is given.

Reading in the Second Year

Reading Material Used

As reading material printed in the initial teaching alphabet is relatively unfamiliar to many, some information is included concerning the books that are now available.

When this study began, the transliterated Janet and John readers were the only series in ITA available. In the second year, however, as well as a larger supply of supplementary library books, two new sets of ITA readers were in print. Consequently, the outdated Janet and John experimental ITA series was discontinued, and the new readers used. As both sets of readers were somewhat different from American basal reading series, an account of each set is given:

1. The Downing ITA Series

This series was produced in England. Only occasionally do any of the stories lean toward British culture. There are eight primers that build up a core vocabulary, utilizing all the sounds of English and all the initial teaching alphabet symbols. Using this core vocabulary two revision story books are presented with no new vocabulary. There are then four readers as a continuation.

Beginning at the fifth primer, cartoon characters of two cats are included in the content, and stories concerning their escapades are presented throughout the remaining books in the series. In the four readers, there are stories in each book documenting the continuing experiences of a car called "Amanda." The stories of Amanda, and of Zip and Wendy, the two cats, were particularly appealing to the children under observation in the ITA classroom.

2. The Early-to-Read ITA Series

This series of seven books was prepared in the United States by Mazurkiewicz and Tanyzer and is novel in its approach. The illustrations are usually in black and white caricature, with the employment of one bright colour; the children in the stories are not all white-skinned; the language used is often the language of children; not all the children are eternally good:

bill	Bill
bill ran out ov the hous	Bill ran out of the house.
hee shut the dor. bang!	He shut the door. Bang!
hee kickt the step.	He kicked the step.
hee kickt the fens.	He kicked the fence.
bill did not smiel.	Bill did not smile.
bill did not laf.	Bill did not laugh.
bill wos mad.	Bill was mad.

In this series, the emphasis is on story content, and the vocabulary load is high. The authors contend that with the absence of traditional orthographic irregularities and inconsistencies, introduction of vocabulary can be increased at a faster rate. The concept load in Books Two to Seven is correspondingly heavy. Books Five to Seven were too difficult for the children in this study, certainly in their first twelve months of reading instruction. This might not be the case for every pupil. The stories that the children read up to the Book Four level, however, had great appeal for six to eight year olds.

The authors have now written an easier introduction to beginning reading (two extra books) to be used after the children have learned their first ten letters.

If the teacher wishes to use them, the entire series comes with manuals and workbooks.

The children in the three groups described used both series of readers. They continued using material printed in ITA until the end of January and completed the instructional reading to the following levels:

ITA Readers Used

		ITA Downing Series							ITA Early-To-Read Series		
		Primers	Revision		Readers						
Groups	No. of Children	1 to 8	a	b	A	B	C	D	2	3	4
I	4	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	*	*	*
II	3	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	*	*	(part of)
III	9	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	*	-	-

As the children were all to be transferred to regular classrooms at the end of June, 1965, it was decided to make the reading transfer to traditional orthography at the end of January. As the teaching staff and the writer had had no previous experience with ITA, this decision was arbitrary. The provision for transition, and transition itself are discussed on pages 46-59. The ITA books that were being used were replaced in the reading groups with standard print readers, at whatever reading level the children had reached. The Nelson Series and Copp Clark Series were used from the end of January until the end of June; in this period the pupils completed the following instructional reading:

Standard Print Readers

	Grade One Level			Grade Two Level
Groups	Surprises Off to School	Mr. Whiskers Come Along With Me	The Toy Box It's Story Time	Magic & Make Believe
I	*	*	*	*
II	*	*	*	-
III	*	*	-	-

Factors Affecting Reading

In discussing continuing difficulties in reading, it is important to remember that the children were now a year older; they had had a year of language development, and because of the learning of many reading skills, few of the initial reading difficulties were evident. Initial difficulties produced by transition to the traditional alphabet are discussed separately.

Reading in ITA During September to January, 1964-65

From reading samples given to the children, only certain reading difficulties were observable, and these occurred with only some of the children.

Substitution

The substitution of a word of like configuration for the correct word in a reading passage, had occurred frequently in the children's first year of reading. A few of the children (five exhibited this error more than once) continued to use substitution words—then for when, will for woz, thæ for mæ, whær for thær. In several instances, however, unlike the previous year, they would make the error while reading the sentence, realize that the substitution was incorrect, and often puzzle out the correct word.

Hesitation

For some of the children, new words were hard to retain. The children in the least able group needed much reinforcement on new words, before they could remember them. This was particularly true as their reading vocabulary increased. For example, the word hied (hide) was not too difficult to decipher using phonetic skills, but when the story extended to include hieding (hiding), and hoelding (holding), they began to refuse words.

These were the two major types of reading errors recorded throughout the ITA term. There were no observed instances of reversals, or progression from right to left. There were odd instances of the insertion of a word, but only with some children. For example, in the sentence "ie hav noe wun too plæ with," one boy would add the word mee to the end of the sentence.

The main differences in the children's patterns and attitudes to reading this year from the previous year were:

(a) Auditory Discrimination—all the children had developed a good listening ear for initial and final consonants. The September to January period was spent in reviewing this type of phonetic skill, as well as reinforcement of patterns, both visual and aural, of the digraphs ch, sh, th, wh, etc.

The retention of this type of skill seemed to eliminate many of the initial reading problems. The children now made few errors in any of their oral reading. Differences among the children were apparent mainly in the fluency with which they read. Most of them had developed good reading "expression," but some, according to ability, read correctly but very slowly, while others read both correctly and fluently. In both cases the consistency of the ITA vowel patterns aided the children in developing fluency in reading, when using this print medium.

(b) Increased Fluency in Speech—the previous year of talking and reading and listening had assisted the children in developing language patterns. This of course aided them in this term, both in understanding and enjoying what they read, and in oral expression. They all seemed more anxious to discuss the content of the stories they were reading. Reading periods often included a child's telling of the story, and a discussion concerning it. In the previous year, most of the children had so little language, this would have been virtually impossible.

(c) Writing—the children had not developed a large enough reading or writing vocabulary in the previous year to produce too much in the field of original writing. This term they all seemed to love to write. Because of their ability, the writing was not always qualitatively excellent, but in all cases, the teacher commented that it was much better than she had experienced in previous years with the same type of child. In the top group, it was both interesting and original (see Figure 8).

The stories the children wrote included many words spelled in the way they spoke, i.e., dat for that, even though they knew the word that and pronounced it correctly in their reading. Unknown words that they wished to use were spelled phonetically. They had no trouble reading their own stories and were always anxious to do so.

The content of their stories was naturally limited, chiefly because their own vocabulary, though enlarged, was still not extensive; following their own speech patterns, the stories contained many conjunctions with no allowance for changes in thought.

(d) Concept—word and language concept had broadened since the children had begun their initial reading the year before. Most of this enlargement had taken place at school, as the environment at home was limited. The degree of broadening, however, would still be considered minute in comparison to that of children living under more favourable circumstances. Consequently, there were still instances in much of the reading of lack of understanding. For example, in a story that nine children were reading, the following sentence appeared: "ie am nue heer and ie hav noe wun tω plæ with." On questioning, six children understood the word nue in this context but three described the sentence as meaning, "He was shiny like the sun," "He didn't have any clothes," and "He wasn't worn out."

Instances of lack of concept applied to approximately fifty per cent of the children. As a consequence, much time had to be devoted in lessons to develop meaning for unfamiliar words and phrases. This lesson involvement in concept needfully continued to the end of the year. Though this learning was divorced from ITA, nevertheless the consistent pattern of ITA made it easier for the children to retain new words and phrases for which they now had meaning.

TRANSITION TO THE TRADITIONAL ALPHABET

At the end of January, 1965, it was decided to effect the transition from ITA to the standard alphabet for all the children. It was felt that a year and two months (the children did not begin their actual reading programme until the end of November, 1963) was not a long enough period for all of the children to reach fluency in ITA reading. However, as the alphabet transition was to be effected by June, 1965, no further delay in transition could be considered, especially for these children being studied. Any new pattern, for most of them, needed a great deal of reinforcement. With the sixteen children remaining in the class, concentration and teaching effort was directed for the remaining five months on the alphabet transition.

Difficulties Observed in Transfer

When discussing transitional difficulties, a differentiation must be made between reading transition, writing transition, and spelling transition. Each presents a different type of problem, the reading transition being the least of these:

Reading Difficulties Observed in Initial Transfer

Two weeks prior to the introduction of standard print readers, capital letters were introduced both in word games and in the use of a simple speller workbook. A few of the capitals caused initial difficulty with a few of the children. Those in the top two groups had little trouble after the first week. Single instances of difficulty observed were:

1. Capitals

(a) Wh

Difficulty occurring not in words such as Which, and When, which are very similar in configuration in ITA, but in irregular sound-symbol words such as Who (spelled hω in ITA).

(b) Th

Lower case th was very similar to ʈh in ITA and did not cause difficulty. When capitalized as in The, There, Then, only five children in the first instance did not recognize the symbol. After the first month, there was no observed difficulty with the capitalized Th.

(c) A

This seemed to cause difficulty only in little words when used at the beginning of a sentence, e.g., "Are you going....?" "At my house...." "Away they went...."

(d) Q and X

These were new letters, seen outside school, but not in their classroom. Much repetitive work had to be done before these two letters were familiar, especially with X. This reinforcement was done in daily word games and seatwork.

(e) I

The capital I seemed to appear much more frequently than the other capital letters. A reading problem arose with some children in one of the reading series in which the capital I was printed in stick form, l. They recognize this as the lower case for L, and hesitated over such words as lnto, lf, and ln.

(f) E

Most of the children mastered the use of this capital easily. One boy, however, supplied a capital Y when asked for the capital version of the letter e. He had derived this from the sound of y in such words as funny and happy.

Generally speaking, after the first three weeks of transfer, capitals were accepted, and were not a large factor in reading transfer difficulty.

2. Vowel Symbol Change

The change in the script of the vowel patterns was a problem when the change was irregular; e.g.,

(a) æ to a-e not so difficult as æ to ere

mæk (make) thær (there)

(b) ie to i-e not as difficult as ie to y or the upper and lower case I, i

tiem (time) mie (my) ie (I) fiend (find).

(c) œ to o-e not as difficult as œ to ow

hœm (home) yellœ (yellow)

(d) ω to oo not as difficult as ω to ue

mωn (moon) blω (blue)

(e) The double e (ϵϵ to ee) caused no reading problem.

sϵϵ (see) ʃhϵϵ (she)

3. Change in Verb Tense

In reading, the past tenses of many of the verbs presented a noticeable difficulty in reading transition. When the children were reading using ITA, no problem arose in changes such as cum to cæm. However, in standard print, with come and came, the similarity in configuration caused some concern. A few of the children, especially those with more limited ability, tended to miss the change in tense. The brighter children read in context, and did not exhibit this problem.

4. Silent Letters

Silent letters that are added at the end of a standard print word caused little problem in reading, except for two children. Even for them the problem was of short duration. The teacher solved this problem by having them recognize the word with the silent e covered, then including it.

5. Irregularities

Words that had no "sound to symbol" relationship in traditional orthography were difficult for some of the pupils. For the word once (wuns in ITA), the children tended to call it one. Other words such as night (niet in ITA) had to be solved from context clues.

There were other irregular spellings that were very difficult. In a story in "Magic and Make Believe," the top group of readers were subjected to the words through and rough, within the context of one paragraph. The word through was solved through context clues. The teacher and children discussed the word rough, however, as the pupils had no meaning for this word. Having defined by object and touch the meaning of this adjective, the teacher then asked the children if they could think of a word to rhyme with rough. One boy suggested Puff (the name of the cat in an earlier reading series) and under the printed word rough, he printed Pough. This occurred in May of the second year, after transition had begun.

6. Endings

Endings of words were now sometimes different. For example, lωkt in ITA became looked in standard print. The children tended to read this word, and words like it, as two syllabic words, i.e., look and ed as in Ted.

The observed reading transition difficulties were of short duration for the more able children in the class. This must be considered relatively, as all the children were originally scheduled in a kindergarten primary class.

For the less able children, as well as the difficulties recorded, there were still problems of substitution and words they could not decipher. Some of the substitutions now noted were such words as make for may, pet for puppet, said for see, Browny for Bunny, may for me, they for their, brick for bring, sad for saw, where for there, one for once. This type of error was identical to the substitution used by the TO children discussed in Part I.

Transitional Printing

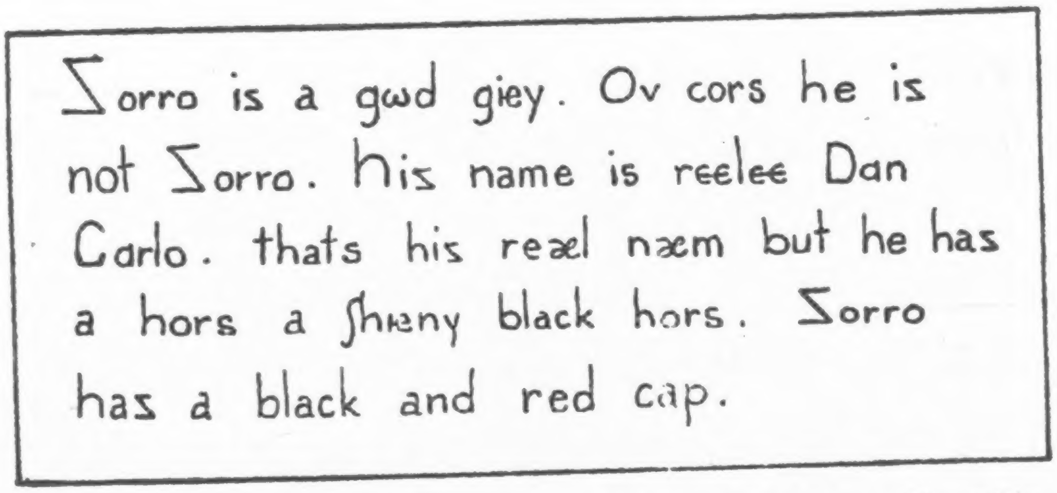
The transition to printing traditional symbols was naturally not accomplished immediately. The children had spent several months writing their own stories in ITA and using their own phrasing. When the reading transition was made, the printing transition was begun, first with capitals. The children were then taught to print families of words that involved the splitting of the ITA vowel symbols, such as æ; in short, the learning of the long ā; e.g., mæk, tæk, cæk, to make, take, cake. These lessons continued through the long and short vowels, and the silent e. Other lessons included the change in the ITA symbols ch, ʃh, th, th, to the digraphs ch, sh, and th.

Endings such as ed and ing were also taught in lesson form. Also, no opportunity was missed in any reading session to point out the differences exhibited in the traditional alphabet.

Major Difficulties in Printing Transition

The children had been used to ITA printing, in which most words were printed as they sound. Consequently, for these children, endings, silent e's, capitals, and some of the vowel changes proved difficult to master quickly. For example, the children read the ing ending in standard print correctly, but in writing, they provided -ig from the ITA -iŋ, rather than -ing.

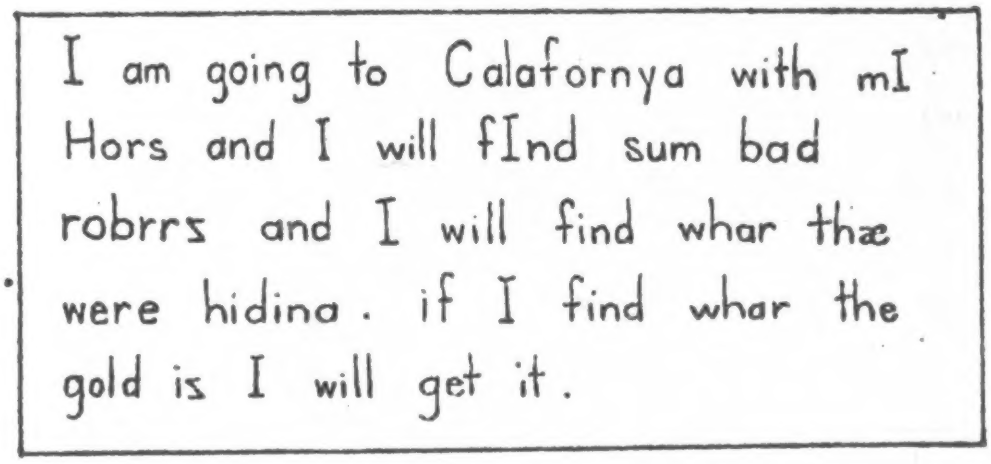
The teaching of the long vowels and the simultaneous splitting of the ITA diphthongs (æ, ϵϵ, ie, œ, ue) made both the reading and writing transition of vowels easier. In early transition, much of the free writing contained instances of both TO and ITA vowel spellings, for example, name and næm (see Figure 2).



Σorro is a gωd giey. Ov cors he is not Σorro. his name is rϵϵlϵϵ Dan Carlo. thats his reæl næm but he has a hors a ʃhieny black hors. Σorro has a black and red cap.

Fig. 2. Early Transitional Writing, February 18, 1965.

There was also confusion in printing the standard alphabet form of the capital I. The children had been used to seeing this letter as ie in ITA. Also the letter is used a great deal. Consequently in the transitional writing stage, they supplied many forms for the capital I, also using it in some instances where the lower case should have been used (see Figure 3).

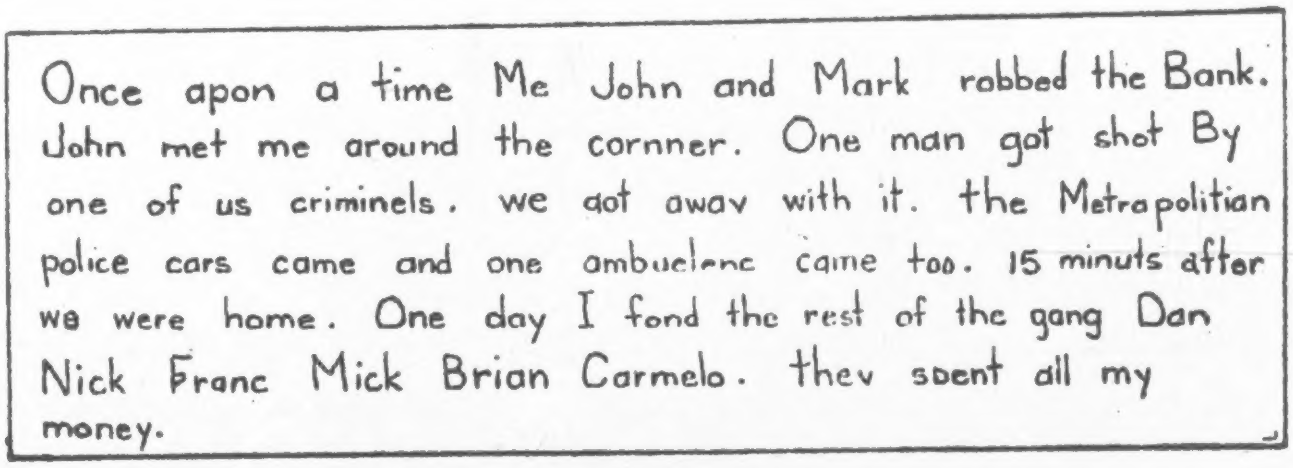


I am going to Calafornya with mI
Hors and I will fInd sum bad
robrrʒ and I will find whar thæ
were hidina. if I find whar the
gold iʒ I will get it.

Fig. 3. Early Difficulty with the Use of Capital "I", February 18, 1965.

Other samples observed showed the use of a large form of the lower case, i.e., i, and often the retention of the ITA form itself, for example, ieS for ice, ieʒ for eyes.

In regard to the use of capitals in writing, the main problem was the correct use of them. Rather than using them at the beginning of sentences and for proper names, several samples of writing showed that they used them sometimes indiscriminately or did not use them at all (see Figure 4).



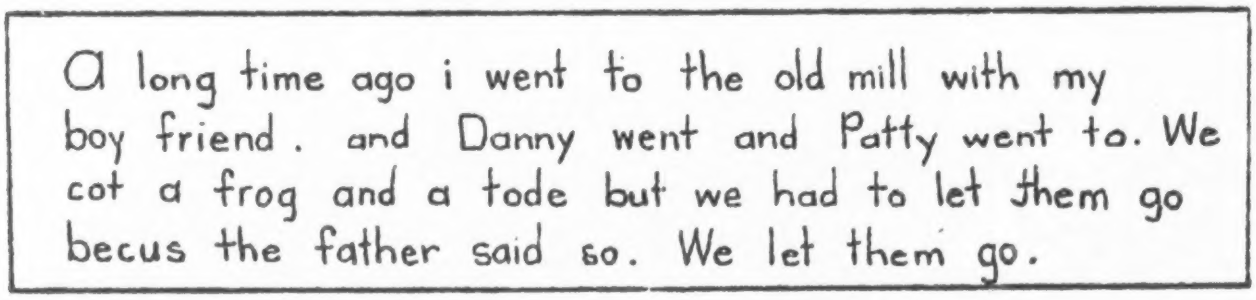
Once apon a time Me John and Mark robbed the Bank.
John met me around the cornner. One man got shot By
one of us criminels. we aot awav with it. the Metropolitian
police cars came and one ambuelenc came too. 15 minuts after
we were home. One day I fond the rest of the gang Dan
Nick Franc Mick Brian Carmelo. thev spent all my
money.

Fig. 4. Misuse of Capitals in Writing, June 2, 1965.

Note.—Each of the children's passages is reproduced by the observer with the child's exact spelling, orthography, and punctuation.

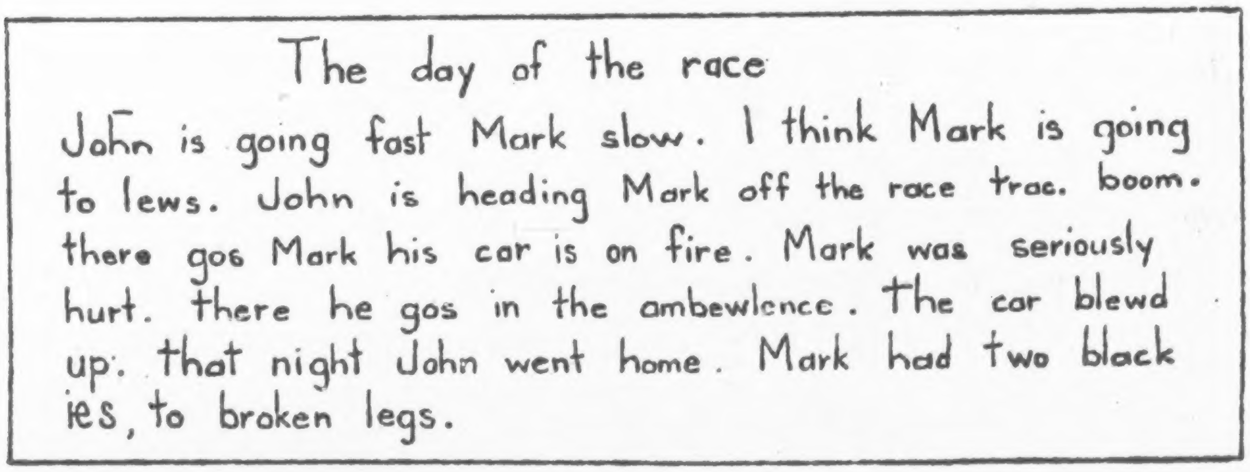
Silent letters, such as e at the end of a word, were generally ignored by the children in printing. Gradually, as their familiarity with the traditional alphabet increased through their reading, they began including the silent letters. Just as in the difficulties explained in the section on reading, there was, in their printing, less trouble with split diphthongs (e.g., tiem to time, than with silent e additions, e.g., hors to horse).

Figures 5 and 6 are further samples of writing a few months after the reading transfer was made. They show instances of the child using phonics to write as he talks, for example, "blewd up," and the confusion in printing too and two.



A long time ago i went to the old mill with my
boy friend. and Danny went and Patty went to. We
cot a frog and a tode but we had to let them go
becus the father said so. We let them go.

Fig. 5. Writing in June, 1965, Phonetic Spelling.



The day of the race

John is going fast Mark slow. I think Mark is going
to lews. John is heading Mark off the race trac. boom.
there gos Mark his car is on fire. Mark was seriously
hurt. there he gos in the ambewlence. The car blewd
up. that night John went home. Mark had two black
ies, to broken legs.

Fig. 6. Writing in June, 1965, Based on a Picture of a Car Race.

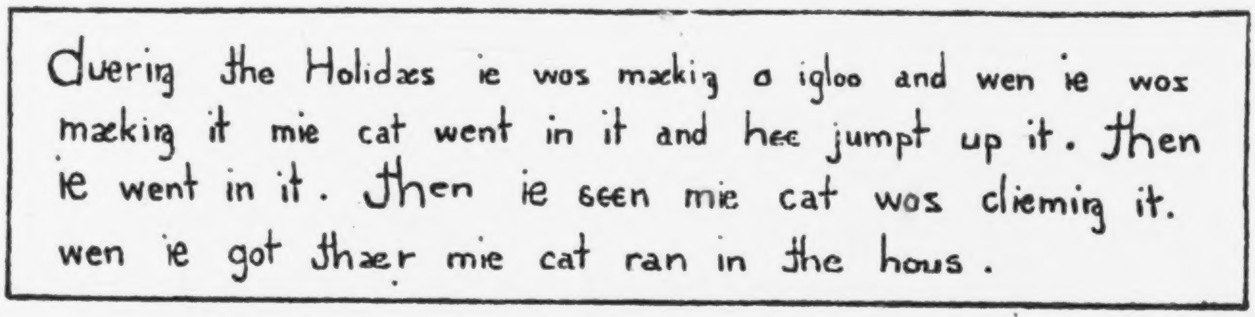
This tendency toward phonetic spelling is exhibited by most children in this stage of reading and writing development. Observations made and samples collected in a regular grade two classroom in which only the traditional alphabet had been taught, exhibited the same kind of spelling as that of the children in this study. From this regular grade two classroom, writings were collected containing the following spelling:

—She was walking hom.
—He was lost. He did not no were his Mother was.
—Miss I—— is a grade too teacher. She is very prtty.
—I like to play outsied.
—I like to go to Ab's hous.
—Mrs. B—— spok to us when the esble (assembly) was on.

In these samples, instances of the omission of the silent e ending (hom, hous, spok), the wrong spelling for know, where, and two (no, were, and too), the phonetic spelling for assembly (esble), and words such as outsied, and prtty were all visible.

The major differences in the writings of the children in this regular grade two classroom and the writings of the children in this study was in quality. There was abundant quantity of writing from all the ITA-TO children, but the quality depended on the individual ability of the child. Considering the abilities of the children being studied, their writings were very encouraging.

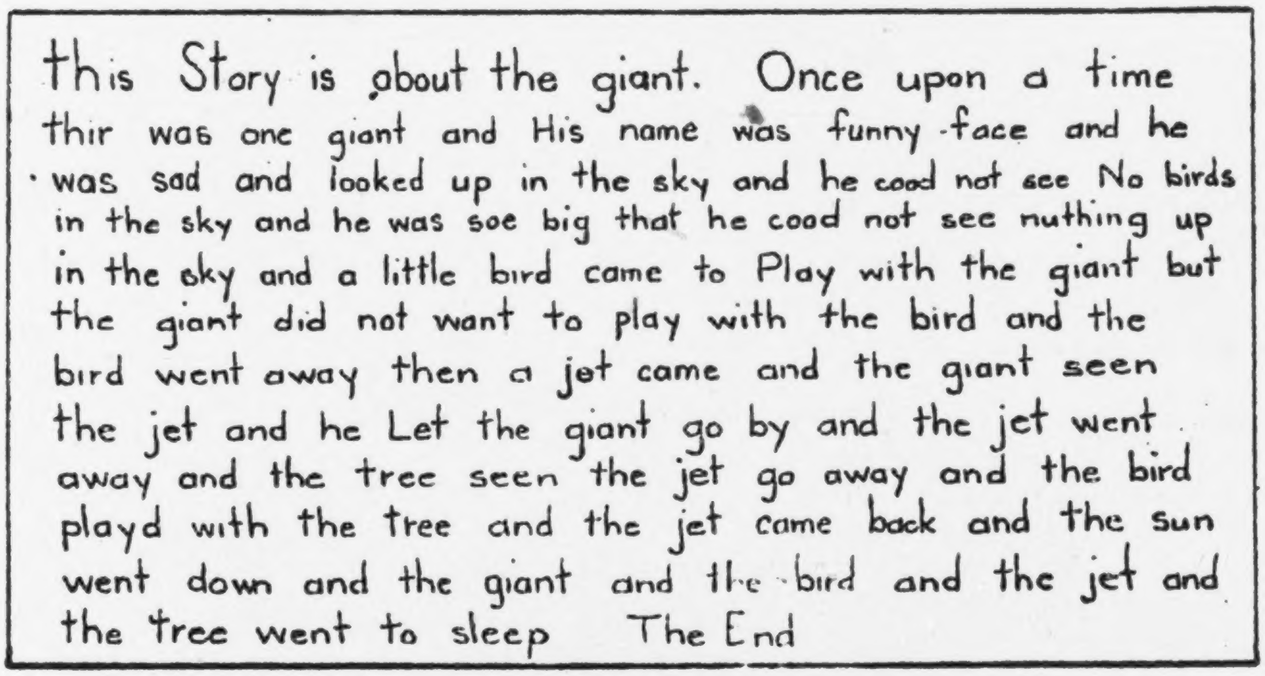
The following passages were written by the same boy, age seven, and are examples of the child's story writing in ITA, and during the transitional period to traditional orthography. Figure 6 was produced when the pupil was given the topic "During the Holidays" (dueriŋ the holidæz). This was one of the last ITA samples before the child was introduced to standard print.



dueriŋ the Holidæs ie wos mækiŋ a igloo and wen ie woz mækiŋ it mie cat went in it and hee jumpt up it. then ie went in it. then ie seen mie cat wos cliemiŋ it. wen ie got thær mie cat ran in the hous.

Fig. 7. ITA Writing, January 4, 1965.

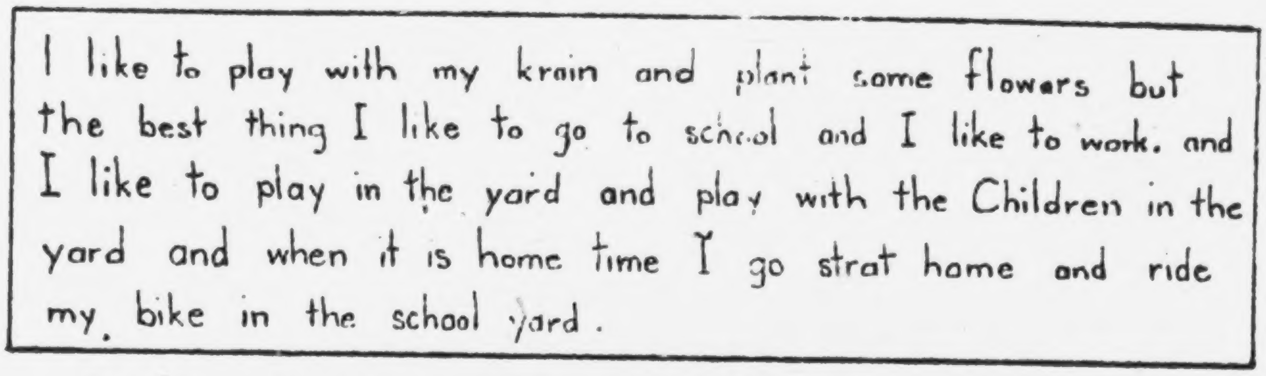
Figure 8 was produced spontaneously in an activity period, ten weeks after transition had begun. Decision to print and choice of topic was the child's own. The story sentences were joined together with "and's"; there was no punctuation of any kind. The observer had heard this pupil talking at daily "news" periods, and this story was written as he talks, no stops and each thought joined by an "and."



this Story is about the giant. Once upon a time thir was one giant and His name was funny-face and he was sad and looked up in the sky and he cood not see No birds in the sky and he was soe big that he cood not see nuthing up in the sky and a little bird came to Play with the giant but the giant did not want to play with the bird and the bird went away then a jet came and the giant seen the jet and he Let the giant go by and the jet went away and the tree seen the jet go away and the bird playd with the tree and the jet came back and the sun went down and the giant and the bird and the jet and the tree went to sleep The End

Fig. 8. Free Writing, Ten Weeks After Transition.

Figure 9 was a piece of writing motivated by the blackboard sentence "What I like to do best." This was done thirteen weeks after transition had begun.



I like to play with my krain and plant some flowers but
the best thing I like to go to school and I like to work. and
I like to play in the yard and play with the Children in the
yard and when it is home time I go strat home and ride
my bike in the school yard .

Fig. 9. TO Writing, Thirteen Weeks After Transition.

These three passages by the one child were selected, not particularly for their story content, but to illustrate the progression in printing (and spelling) where models were not provided.

Spelling in Transition

Normally for a kindergarten primary pupil, formal spelling would not be given until the child had reached a grade two reading level. As some of the children were going into a grade three programme the following year after this study, some formal spelling was given and was helpful in examining differences in ITA and TO symbol changes. From an examination of their spelling efforts, it appeared that there was little trouble with word families, or consistent spelling patterns, but difficulties with the traditional orthography inconsistences, for example, knife was spelled nief, pear was spelled pare, and pencil was spelled pensil. There was no trouble with words such as cake, pump, or fork.

A spelling test in symbol transfer was given to each child individually by the observer in March and the same test repeated in June. With each child, the test was preceded by a talk between the child and the observer concerning the various differences in standard print and ITA. The words used in the test were words that the children were now reading successfully in traditional orthography. The results of this spelling transfer sample are given on page 57.

RESULTS OF SYMBOL TRANSFER TEST GIVEN MARCH 25 AND JUNE 11, 1965

Symbol Change ITA	Symbol Change TO	Word Change ITA	Word Change TO	No. of Children with Incorrect Transfer (N = 14) March 25	No. of Children with Incorrect Transfer (N = 14) June 11
ee	ee	green	green	0	0
		tree	tree	0	0
		three	three	0	0
		chees	cheese	0	0
ou	ou	hous	house	3	0
æ	a	cæk	cake	4	1
		bæby	baby	3	0
æ	ere	whær	where	12	5
ks	x	boks	box	3	0
œ	o	gœ	go	4	0
œ	ow	yellœ	yellow	11	0
silent 'e'		cæk	cake	3	1
		tiem	time	3	0
		kiet	kite	5	1
		appl	apple	6	1
		hous	house	10	3
		chees	cheese	14	2
		whiet	white	*	0
ŋ	ng	kiŋ	king	6	2
ch	ch	chees	cheese	6	0
wh	wh	whær	where	6	4
		whiet	white	*	0
th	th	father	father	7	0
th	th	three	three	7	0
oi	oy	boi	boy	7	0
		toi	toy	*	0
ω	oo	bωk	book	1	0
ω	oo	mωn	moon	1	0
ω	wo	tω	two	6	0
ω	ue	blω	blue	10	3
au	a	baull	ball	8	1
ie	y	mie	my	10	0

*** The additional words white and toy were included in the June test only.**

From the errors listed, it can be seen that there were many words in March that were not familiar enough in standard print to allow for correct spelling. This would be natural for children at this level of reading whether using ITA or the standard alphabet. These children left out unsounded letters, spelled phonetically (e.g., bloo for blue), and retained the ITA spelling for words such as boy (boi) where (whær), yellow (yellœ), and my (mie).

When the test was repeated in June, four and one-half months after transfer, there was little difficulty with any of the words, except where, there, blue, and words containing silent e endings, and these difficulties were apparent in the spellings of only a few of the children.

By June, the spelling in original writing was almost entirely in the traditional alphabet, except for the four children in the class who had shown the least ability. They still retained vestiges of ITA printing, and particularly resorted to ITA when they could not visualize the TO word. This was different from the rest of the children who would, in the same situation, resort to phonetic spelling.

With reference to free writing, the question is asked: "Will the children retain an enthusiasm for writing?" The children did a great deal of free writing during their period with ITA. With the four slower children in the class, this enthusiasm for writing lessened when they began printing in traditional orthography. The other children continued to enjoy free story writing periods, and spelled phonetically the words they did not know. If in their future programmes, writing is encouraged, with no undue emphasis on spelling, then the outlook for original stories from some of these children would be optimistic.

General Progress of the Children in the Second Year of Study

The progress in reading of the children who learned to read using ITA was satisfactory over the two-year period. These twenty children had been placed in a kindergarten primary class following their kindergarten year. Because of their record in kindergarten, the slower pace and more individualized attention of the kindergarten primary was considered an advantage for their general development. Normally from this type of class, a few children might go on to grade two but the majority would advance to a regular grade one class for their second year of instruction. This major group would then go on to grade two for the third year of instruction.

For their third year of instruction, the ITA children observed in this study had advanced to the following stages:

five children were placed in a grade three programme;
nine children were placed in a grade two programme;
four children were placed in a grade two programme on trial;
two children were placed in an opportunity class.

Three of the four children placed in grade two on trial were Italian New Canadians who needed a great deal of help in language before beginning to read. Considering their lack of English at the beginning of their kindergarten primary year, they had learned a great deal.

The above classification includes six children who transferred out of the ITA class.

TRANSFERRED CHILDREN

During the two-year period, six children transferred out of the ITA classroom. In the first year the four transfers occurred on: April 24; May 5; May 20; and June 26, 1964. Each child transferred to a different school. In the second year, the two transfers (a brother and a sister) occurred on March 19, 1965. These two children transferred to the same school.

In the first year none of the children were at a reading level condusive to transfer. In the second year, both children had been in transition from ITA to TO print for six weeks. One of these children was placed in an opportunity class. This boy was seven years, five months when he entered the ITA kindergarten primary class, having spent two years in kindergarten. He was nine years old when he made the transfer in March, 1965. His sister, transferred at the same time, was placed in an advanced grade one programme, was reading well and though visited, needed no help in ITA-TO transition. Except for the instances of phonetic spelling and the odd ITA symbol in free writing, her teacher noted no problems in the classroom, and was pleased with the child's reading ability.

As the four earlier transferees in the 1964 year had not been reading, even in ITA, for a very long period, namely five months to seven months, their transition from ITA to traditional orthography will be discussed more fully.

The observer was informed of two pending transfers and was able to spend four half-hour periods with these two children before they transferred out of the ITA room. Two other children were transferred before much help in the ITA room could be given to them; the school was notified only shortly before the move. Each child was visited in his new classroom. An account of the procedure used to help the children make the transfer to TO is given in the following outline.

Working with Transferred Children

It must be emphasized that the following was a plan to be used with "slow-learning" children only. Evidence from the British and American studies indicate that no special reading help is needed by average children making the transfer, if the children are already reading fluently in ITA. The problem in the present study was two-fold: the children were not ready for the transfer and they were also having difficulties in learning to read. Transfer instruction for these children was given by the observer.

Steps Employed in Helping Prematurely Transferred Children

It was found best to start the child with a TO book with which he was familiar, i.e., one he had already read in ITA. This was for one lesson only, as the child was not too interested in re-reading a book he already knew well; the child also tended to read what he remembered from his ITA reader, and did not actually see the TO print.

This was demonstrated when the child was shown another TO reader with nearly identical words but with different story material and a new design. With this, the child at first floundered.

The second lesson introduced matching TO-ITA word puzzles. (The ITA words chosen for any puzzle used were words the child had been exposed to.) The likenesses and differences of each TO word were discussed.

The third lesson followed the pattern of the second except that sentences were now matched. The capital letter at the beginning of each sentence was examined; the blackboard was used to draw the matching capital and lower case letters.

The fourth lesson included word puzzles of capitalized TO words and matching ITA words. Again capitals were discussed and drawn, this time on paper. Also each irregularity, such as the silent e as in came, and ey and ay as in they and say, were discussed and the differences noted.

The child was then introduced to a TO series, in this case "Surprises," the pre-primer in the Nelson Series. The child did not mind, in fact, seemed to enjoy beginning with the easy material, as long as the story content and characters were new to him.

This reading was supplemented with books number twenty to thirty-two of the Janet and John "Little Book" series in traditional print. These books, containing few pages and many pictures were a success both in TO and ITA as the child enjoyed the success of finishing a book in a relatively short period.

This outline was followed with the four transferred children. Except for one lesson before they left, the earliest transferees were given the instruction outlined in their new class. The third child, who transferred out at the end of May, was given instruction both in the ITA class and in her new school. The fourth child did not transfer out until the last day of school. Her initial instruction was received during her ITA school day, and additional instruction was given in the first two months of the following school year.

Profile of the Transferred Children

Child 1

This boy transferred out of the ITA class on April 14. His new school, under the jurisdiction of another school board, was twelve miles away. His new class seemed to be an average unstreamed formal grade one. He was not ready for even the low reading group in this room.

The observer made several visits to see this child, spending an hour with him each time. The reading plan outlined above was followed. In the classroom, the teacher had the boy read to her individually each day.

Capitals were at first the biggest difficulty for this boy, especially D and H. On the first two visits, words containing the long ā sound were confusing. For example, he refused the word make. When the observer printed the word in ITA, mæk, then printed the word in TO below, the child knew the word. The splitting of the ITA æ symbol was discussed, and word families containing the long ā sound were learned in a word game. The same procedure was followed in a later lesson with the ay sound in may, say, hay, etc.

This child had not progressed to a point where he could mesh certain reading skills to help him solve reading difficulties. He also had been attending speech class at his former school.

By June, his progress in TO was no different from that of any other child of the same mental capacity. In the 1964-65 year, he was placed in a grade one room and was visited once by the observer. He was progressing reasonably well and placed in a grade two room on trial for the 1965-66 year.

Child 2

This boy transferred out of the ITA class on May 5. His school was under the same school board jurisdiction as Child 1's school and was eleven miles away.

This child had not done too well in the ITA room and was a behaviour problem. The observer followed this child's progress, making visits the same day as the visits to Child 1. Capitals and silent e's were early problems.

The teacher supplied the following comments at the end of June:

- --quite pleased with the child's progress;
- --instances of ITA printing the first month, no instances by the end of June;
- --reading adequately in the Ginn Series;
- --settled down, seemed to be enjoying school, no behavioural problems.

Earlier, this teacher had commented to the observer that she had noticed that when this child finished his work, he would go to the book corner, select a book and take it back to his seat, without disturbing her or the rest of the children. This pattern had been exhibited in the ITA room, and seemed to carry over into the child's new classroom. This child did well in grade one the following year and progressed to grade two for the 1965-66 year.

Child 3

This girl transferred to a school twelve miles away. The school was under the same school board as that of Child 1 and 2. More time was available to work with this child before she left the ITA room. Her parents had informed the school that she would be leaving.

This child had less trouble than Child 1 and 2 in making the alphabet adjustment, perhaps attributable to her better reading ability in ITA. Capitals were still a problem at first, chiefly B and D. In a week, this child was reading TO print at her reading level, slowly but adequately. Words with entirely different spelling were difficult only when out of context. For example, the child was reading a sentence that included the word want. The sound and spelling of w and wh were discussed. The child then volunteered a word she knew that started with the w sound. The word she gave was one (wun in ITA). The same sound but different traditional spelling was discussed. When the traditionally spelled one was used in a number game, along with the TO number words, two, three, and four, the child recognized the word. Five and six caused no trouble but eight was very difficult. The child learned to recognize the word but if asked to print the word with no visual aids, the task was too difficult. This word, eight, had not as yet appeared in her reader.

After the first month the child had read Book One of the Winston Series, "Stories About Sandy." She had few difficulties. She read more slowly than the other children in the class, but this perhaps was a function of her previous environment. In her kindergarten primary room the emphasis was on experiences, talking, and activity rather than on formal reading. By the end of June, her printing still contained traces of ITA, her reading was adequate at her level. The child was recommended on trial for grade two. She completed grade two in the 1964-65 year and was recommended for grade three for the 1965-66 year.

Child 4

This child was to be transferred at the end of June. Consequently some time was spent with her during the month of June. This child seemed brighter, more eager, and precocious than the other children in the ITA classroom. She had been doing well in her reading programme and was having few difficulties. The described transfer programme was too slow for her. She had the ability to look at the TO print and immediately point up differences. After only a few matching puzzles, she began reading from a TO reader, "Surprises." If she could not decipher a TO word, she used context and phonic clues, and was not timid in guessing. Most of the time her guess was correct.

In June, at the last session with this child, she was reading "Mr. Whiskers" of the Nelson Series. Capital letters, *H* and *R* were problems. She refused *He*. After a discussion about this letter, she had no difficulty with *Hello* and *Here* in the next two lines.

In the title of a story "Old Red Fox," using picture clues she read *Old* and *Fox* but refused *Red*, pointing to the *R*.

In another sentence she substituted *now* (*nou* in ITA) for *out* in the sentence Look *out* for the Old Red Fox. This was a substitution frequently made in the ITA room, not occurring in the TO room.

She also refused the word *go* in the first instance. The observer then printed the word in ITA (*gœ*) and in TO (*go*, *Go*). She commented that she thought it might be part of *got* but that *go* (pronounced *gaw*), didn't say anything. After a chat about ITA spelling and TO spelling, she did not refuse the word again.

This child was given lessons in transition by the observer regularly through September and October of the 1964 year, and at the end of June, 1965 passed successfully into grade three.

Discussion of Transferred Children

A child will only make an easy and successful transfer to traditional spelling if he had experienced a great deal of reading. Reference is made to reading at any level, not particularly, advanced material. ITA affords this opportunity. It seems easier to master because of its reliability; the children appear to have more confidence in beginning reading; and the material is available. However, if the child has not had enough exposure to print in the form of reading, as opposed to words and word analysis, an early transfer is both confusing and difficult. The child then has difficulty understanding the concept of a group of printed words in proper sequence telling him something. With the added problem of symbol change at a time when the ITA symbols have not been thoroughly mastered, the transfer is not made with facility. Each child was moved to a classroom in which a traditional-type programme was being used. If the experience approach method of reading had been used, the difficulties of transfer might have been lessened.

In answer to the question "Would each of these early-transferred children have been farther ahead if they had experienced their limited learning in traditional print?", the answer would appear to be negative, i.e., ITA made no difference to their position. This was predetermined by the type of class they had been exposed to, namely a kindergarten primary where the accent was on activity and language experience.

One thing was apparent--each of these children attacked the new programme of traditional print without temerity. They had not seemed to experience too much frustration in learning to read with an easier alphabet, and now adopted a bright outlook toward their new TO reading programme.

Generally, no serious problems arose with the transfer of any of these children. It must be remembered, however, that each child's progress was followed, and instruction in transition provided. This was considered essential as all school personnel were not completely familiar with the Initial Teaching Alphabet. In each case, the principal of the school was visited and the programme in which the child had been involved was explained. Full school co-operation was given within the Toronto School Board, and in the York and North York Boards, where three of the children continued their schooling.

DISCUSSION - PART II

The main concern in the second year of this project was the documentation of the reading and writing difficulties encountered by the ITA children in making the transition to traditional orthography. Of interest also were the successes or failures of the children who had transferred out of the ITA classroom to regular classrooms in other schools.

Current literature on the use of the initial teaching alphabet places little stress on transitional difficulties, especially in reference to writing; nor is there much information on length of time to make a satisfactory transfer. The children observed in this report proceeded through a reading and writing transition for five months. They seemed to accept the change in orthography as a step forward in their school programme. On two occasions the same type of child's comment was heard: "Now that we can read, we're going to use the 'grown-up' printing." That learning proceeded from the simple to the complex was accepted without question.

Even for these slow-learning children who did not acquire language skills with the same facility as the average child, the reading transfer was still surprising. The children generally seemed to notice very little change in the orthography and from the first day exhibited no great surprise at any printing change. A few commented on the odd word that had no counterpart in ITA, such as one (wun) and eight (æt), but for the most part, their comments in no way indicated that the new printing was particularly strange or hard to master. Perhaps it is only to the adult eye, conditioned for so many years to standard print, that the different symbols of the beginning alphabet appear strange; particularly when contrasted with the familiar standard print.

The reading transfer then, presented no large problems. The irregularities of standard print seemed to be easier for the children to perceive. Because they had learned to read using a more consistent sound-symbol orthography, they seemed to immediately notice and want to discuss such inconsistencies as through and rough, mentioned on page 49. This pointed out one of the factors in the use of the initial teaching alphabet, in that the different aspects of irregular standard orthography were separated from the early learning-to-read process. Whether the sequence of acquiring needed reading skills with a consistent orthography, and then undertaking the learning of TO irregularities would facilitate spelling instruction in primary grades is a field worthy of study.

Included in this field of study would be the consideration of advantages or disadvantages of teaching compound words, punctuation, sentence structure, etc. to primary children when they are reading in ITA, i.e., when their reading is not hampered with vowel inconsistencies and double pronunciation of the same consonant. As this was the method of teaching used for the children in this study, perhaps this accounted for the absence of any large problem in reading when the orthography was abruptly changed in January. They and the teacher could focus attention directly on inconsistencies of sound-symbol relationship.

In reading, the children still had difficulties similar to their earlier problems, usually substitution, (one like word for another) or hesitation (words they just did not know and could not solve with the skills they had.)

These difficulties were no different from those that would be exhibited by any child of the same ability, and could not be attributed to the difference in the alphabet. Each child continued reading in traditional orthography with the same fluency and at the same level that he had attained using ITA.

As might be expected, the writing and spelling transitions were not accomplished with the ease of the reading transition. The change in the writing of the traditional alphabet was a gradual transition and leaned more and more toward traditional print as the children became surrounded by the standard symbols. By the end of the year, the brighter children in the class exhibited very little ITA printing in their free writing. Rather, their errors lay in the misuse of capitals or in incorrect phonetic spelling. The children with less ability tended to retain the ITA print longer, and certainly reverted to it when they wished to print a word that they could not visualize in traditional print.

It is expected then, that the transition in writing will carry over into their next year's programme. The children will be in the same school where the teaching staff are familiar with the ITA programme, and will continue any needed instruction in transitional writing.

SUMMARY - PART II

This second year of study was concerned with reading difficulties encountered by slow-learning primary pupils using the initial teaching alphabet; during the transition from this alphabet to traditional orthography; and using traditional orthography. Because of the changed orthography in initial reading, it was not assumed that these children would all become fluent readers with no problems whatsoever. They had come to school with sparse vocabulary, and had not had all of the advantages of some middle-class children to aid them in beginning to read in the school environment. The proponents of the initial teaching alphabet itself do not claim that the purpose of this alphabet is to show dramatic differences in reading achievement. It has been stated that "the purpose of this alphabet medium, approximating the traditional, is to ensure that the beginning stages of reading are as natural as possible, that reading begins without frustration, that the child learns reading and writing easily, and that, after he has developed his code-breaking skills to an efficient level, his transfer to traditional print be as simple and effective as possible" (Mazurkiewicz, 1965, p. 11-12).

In discussing the success in reading of the children in this study in the light of this purpose of ITA, one must first consider the beginning stages of reading. For the ITA children, this was a period of language and experience learning. No reading was possible until the prerequisites of reading had been developed--listening, touching, feeling, and speaking. When the children began reading, they seemed to find the experience enjoyable. Part of the credit must be attributed to the enthusiasm of the teacher, as well as to ITA. ITA did make the earlier task easier, and there was no child that "did not want to read." This does not mean that they all read fluently, but rather that at whatever level they had attained, they did not consider their reading periods a chore.

This was partially due to the type of material that can be presented in ITA, both in original material and in readers. Because of the consistency of the ITA symbol, the Early-to-Read Series made less use of repetition and vocabulary control, and placed more emphasis on the content of stories which were closer to the child's own vocabulary, language pattern, and experience. The important factor would seem to be that this can be done where the impact of reading as an enjoyable experience should be the greatest, i.e., in the first pre-primer.

Because of the consistency of the initial teaching alphabet, it was easier for the child to have his listening and speaking vocabulary become his reading vocabulary. This was a particular advantage considering the ability of the children in this study. At the same time, however, the transition, particularly in writing, presented the problem of learning, then partial unlearning. To overcome this problem, adequate time must be allowed to make the transition completely, especially with the slow-learning child. For the children in this study, writing and spelling transition certainly did not occur simply and easily. It was instead a gradual transition, becoming easier each day as the child familiarized himself with the standard alphabet symbols in word and sentence patterns.

With reference to spelling and the below-average child, this again would seem to depend on the time allowed for transition and the care employed in accounting for all the many intricacies of the inconsistent traditional alphabet.

Little has been published to use as a guide in this respect. Formal tests given in Britain and the United States tend to indicate that ITA children have not been handicapped in later spelling. Greater insight might have been gained by examining spelling in reference to daily word and original writing rather than in terms of standardized tests.

Story-writing in ITA was enjoyed and practiced voluntarily by the children. Again, considering their ability, this seemed to be an advantage in using this easier alphabet. This free writing diminished with the less able children when they began printing in traditional orthography. With the other children, continuation of writing would seem to depend on the degree of emphasis placed on spelling and neatness, the teacher's enthusiasm for spontaneous writing regardless of mistakes, and enough time to absorb traditional orthography patterns thoroughly.

In conclusion, observation did indicate that the small heterogeneous class who learned to read through the medium of ITA enjoyed their two years of reading instruction. It is possible that ITA of itself helped to foster this. The retention of this interest--an important goal in an early reading programme--may in turn be a function of ITA. It is too early, however, and a matter beyond the scope of this report, to weigh the value of this "interest" factor against the possible disadvantage of writing and spelling transition.

The Advantage of this Study

A word must be said about the advantage of conducting a study of this kind. When one enters a project covering a relatively new field, useful information is acquired as to the actual physical exercise of setting up such a project. Knowledge has been gained regarding the best methods of selection of subjects, teachers, and schools; of the blending of research procedures with the everyday function of school-room administration. The information obtained should be considered when future projects involving primary reading are undertaken.

. If ITA is to be used by principals and teachers within the Board, the following considerations should be basic to such a programme:

1. The careful selection of the children to be used--they must be ready for a reading programme.
2. The careful selection of the teacher--for a successful ITA programme, at present, the teacher must evolve her own programme, her own materials, and cannot rely on conventional "basal series" methods. Though adequate in supply, there is not the widest selection of materials at the moment. A teacher who can use "the experience approach" would probably be ready to meet these challenges.
3. Adequate time must be allowed to complete the total programme of reading and transition to account for the wide range of abilities within the group. The whole group will not all be ready for transition at the same time. This is a load for the teacher and one of which she and others involved in the programme should be aware.
4. Because of the intricacies of this hitherto little-used alphabet, careful supervision and control of the development of the programme including transition should be in the hands of an authoritative body such as the Language Study Centre.

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APPENDIX A

ORAL QUESTIONS ON ENGLISH COMPREHENSION

NAME:

GROUP: DATE:

English Comprehension

1. Show me one finger.
2. Touch your head.
3. Put your hand on mine.
4. Point to my watch.
5. Walk to the window.
6. Show me the lights.
7. Put your hands over your ears.
8. Point to the door.
9. How many shoes are you wearing.
10. Walk to your chair and sit down please.

APPENDIX B

ORAL QUESTIONS ON READING

NAME:

GROUP:

DATE:

1. SCHOOL ATTITUDE

Do you like to come to school?

Yes

No

Not really

2. INTEREST AND CURIOSITY CONCERNING THE PROCESS OF LEARNING TO READ

(a) Do you want to learn to read? Why?

(b) Why does your teacher want you to learn to read?

(c) What do you think a word is?

(d) Can you tell me what a story is made up of?

3. EXPOSURE TO READING

(a) Do you have any books in your house?

(b) Does anyone at home read to you?

(c) What stories do you like best?

(d) Do your mother and father read at home?

(e) What do you think your teacher likes to read?